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1. (Amended) A plate-link chain for continuously variable, conical disk transmissions, said chain comprising: a plurality of chain links extending along a chain movement direction and including side-by-side and end-to-end plate links having openings to receive articulation members formed as pairs of rocker members received in the openings of the plate links and having rocker surfaces supported against each other, wherein at least end faces of the rocker members that operatively contact surfaces of conical disks of a transmission have a nitrogen-enriched outer layer in the form of a carbon-nitrided layer, wherein the carbon-nitrided layer has a nitrogen content of at least about 0.01% and has a thickness of at least about 50 μm .

2. (Amended) A thrust link belt for continuously variable, conical disk transmissions, said thrust link belt comprising: at least one closed belt strand in the form of an endless loop, and a plurality of laterally-extending, face-to-back thrust links in the form of plates carried by the strand, wherein at least lateral end faces of the thrust links that operatively contact surfaces of conical disks of a transmission have a nitrogen-enriched outer layer in the form of a carbon-nitrided layer, wherein the carbon-nitrided layer has a nitrogen content of at least about 0.01% and has a thickness of at least about 50 μm .

3. (Amended) A continuously variable, conical disk transmission, said transmission comprising: a first shaft and a second shaft, whereby on each of the first and the second shafts two conical disks are provided with substantially frustum-like surfaces facing toward one another, and wherein at least one conical disk per shaft is

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axially movable relative to the shaft, wherein at least the frustum-like surfaces of the conical disks that operatively frictionally contact an endless torque-transmitting means include a nitrogen-enriched outer surface layer, in the form of a carbon-nitrided layer, wherein the carbon-nitrided layer has a nitrogen content of at least about 0.01% and has a thickness of at least about 50 μm .

Kindly add the following new claims:

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--7. A plate-link chain in accordance with claim 1, wherein the nitrogen content of the carbon-nitrided layer is between about 0.05% and about 0.1%.--

--8. A plate-link chain in accordance with claim 1, wherein after carbon-nitriding the rocker members are subjected to a case hardening process.--

--9. A plate-link chain in accordance with claim 8, wherein the case hardening depth is at least 0.3 mm.--

--10. A plate-link chain in accordance with claim 8, wherein the case hardening depth is at least 0.5 mm.--

--11. A thrust link belt in accordance with claim 2, wherein the nitrogen content of the carbon-nitrided layer is between about 0.05% and about 0.1%.--

--12. A thrust link belt in accordance with claim 2, wherein after carbon-nitriding

the rocker members are subjected to a case hardening process.--

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--13. A thrust link belt in accordance with claim 12, wherein the case hardening depth is at least 0.3 mm.--

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--14. A thrust link belt in accordance with claim 12, wherein the case hardening depth is at least 0.5 mm.--

--15. A continuously variable, conical disk transmission in accordance with claim 3, wherein the nitrogen content of the carbon-nitrided layer is between about 0.05% and about 0.1%.--

--16. A continuously variable, conical disk transmission in accordance with claim 3, wherein after carbon-nitriding the rocker members are subjected to a case hardening process.--

--17. A continuously variable, conical disk transmission in accordance with claim 16, wherein the case hardening depth is at least 0.3 mm.--

--18. A continuously variable, conical disk transmission in accordance with claim 16, wherein the case hardening depth is at least 0.5 mm.--

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--19. A plate link chain in accordance with claim 1, wherein the rocker members undergo an annealing treatment at a temperature of from about 780°C to about 1050°C in a carburizing atmosphere that includes a carbon-containing gas selected from the group consisting of natural gas, propane, ammonia, and mixtures thereof for a time sufficient to obtain a desired case hardening depth, and wherein the rocker members are subsequently cooled to a hardening temperature with subsequent martensitic hardening by quenching to a temperature below a martensitic formation temperature and tempered at a temperature of from about 150°C to about 250°C.--

--20. A thrust link belt in accordance with claim 2, wherein the thrust links undergo an annealing treatment at a temperature of from about 780°C to about 1050°C in a carburizing atmosphere that includes a carbon-containing gas selected from the group consisting of natural gas, propane, ammonia, and mixtures thereof for a time sufficient to obtain a desired case hardening depth, and wherein the rocker members are subsequently cooled to a hardening temperature with subsequent martensitic hardening by quenching to a temperature below a martensitic formation temperature and tempered at a temperature of from about 150°C to about 250°C.--

--21. A continuously variable, conical disk transmission in accordance with claim 3, wherein the conical disks undergo an annealing treatment at a temperature of from about 780°C to about 1050°C in a carburizing atmosphere that includes a carbon-containing gas selected from the group consisting of natural gas, propane, ammonia, and mixtures thereof for a time sufficient to obtain a desired case hardening depth,